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AND

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**ON THE
DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL RESPONSE CHAIN OF COMMAND**

**HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS & OVERSIGHT**

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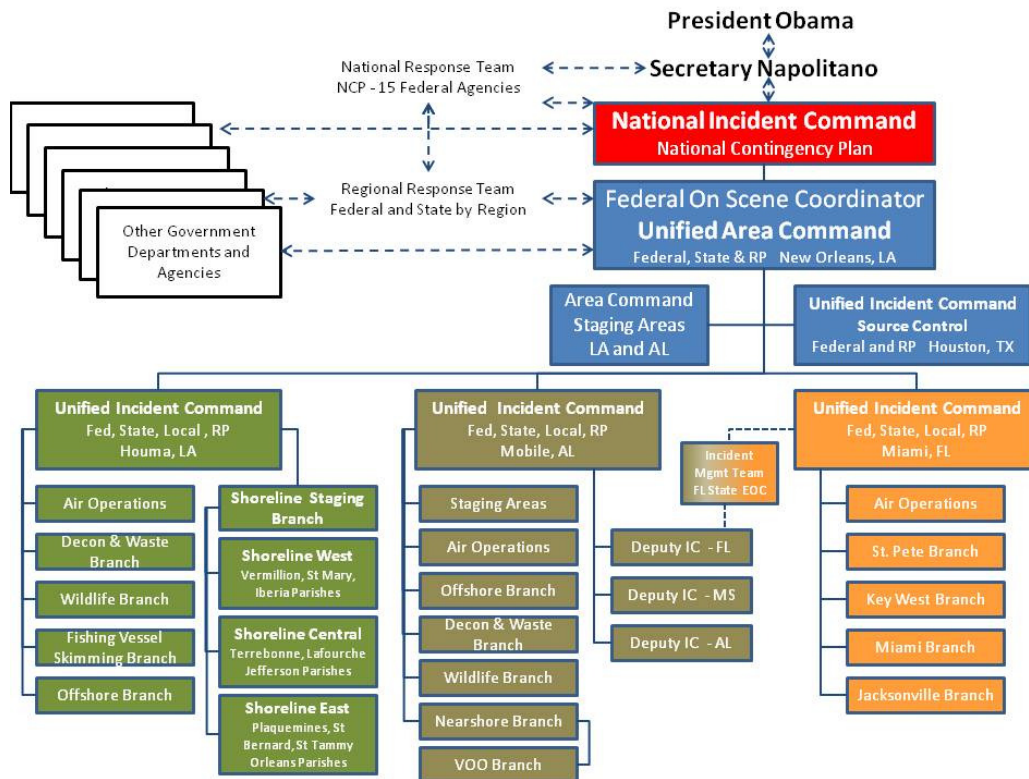
Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Federal Government's response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill specifically the chain of command for responders.

On the evening of April 20, 2010, the Transocean-owned, BP-chartered, Marshall Islands-flagged Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) DEEPWATER HORIZON, located approximately 72 miles Southeast of Venice, Louisiana, reported an explosion and fire onboard. This began as a Search and Rescue (SAR) mission—within the first few hours, 115 of the 126 crewmembers were safely recovered; SAR activities continued through April 23rd, though the other 11 crewmembers remain missing.

Concurrent with the SAR effort, the response to extinguishing the fire and mitigating the impacts of the approximate 700,000 gallons of diesel fuel onboard began almost immediately. In accordance with the operator's Minerals Management Service (MMS)-approved Response Plan, oil spill response resources, including Oil Spill Response Vessels (OSRVs), were dispatched to the scene. After two days of fighting the fire, the MODU sank into approximately 5,000 feet of water on April 22nd. On April 23rd, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) located the MODU on the seafloor, and, on April 24th, BP found the first two leaks in the riser pipe and alerted the federal government. ROVs continue to monitor the flow of oil.



As the event unfolded, a robust Incident Command System (ICS) response organization was stood up in accordance with the National Response Framework (NRF) and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). ICS is utilized to provide a common method for developing and implementing tactical plans to efficiently and effectively manage the response to oil spills. The ICS organization for this response includes Incident Command Posts and Unified Commands at the local level, and a Unified Area Command at the regional level. It is comprised of representatives from the Coast Guard (Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC)), other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as BP as a Responsible Party.



The federal government has addressed the Gulf Oil Spill with an all-hands-on deck approach from the moment the explosion occurred. During the night of April 20th—the date of the explosion—a command center was set up on the Gulf Coast to address the potential environmental impact of the event and to coordinate with state and local governments. After the MODU sank on the 22nd, the National Response Team (NRT), led by the Secretary of Homeland Security and comprised of 16 Federal agencies including the Coast Guard, other DHS offices, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Interior (DOI), as well as Regional Response Teams (RRT), was activated.

On April 29, Secretary Napolitano declared the event a Spill of National Significance (SONS), which enhanced operational and policy coordination at the national level and concurrently allowed Admiral Allen's appointment as the National Incident Commander (NIC) for the Administration's continued, coordinated response. The NIC's role is to coordinate strategic communications, national policy, and resource support, and to facilitate collaboration with key parts of the federal, state and local governments.

The NIC staff is comprised of subject matter experts from across the federal government, allowing for immediate interagency collaboration, approval and coordination. While the FOSC maintains authorities for response operations as directed in the National Contingency Plan, the NIC's primary focus is providing national-level support to the operational response. This means providing the Unified Command with everything that it needs – from resources to policy decisions –to secure the source and mitigate the impact. This will be a sustained effort that will continue until the discharges are permanently stopped and the effects of the spill are mitigated to the greatest extent possible. Beyond securing the source of the spill, the Unified Command is committed to minimizing the economic and social impacts to the affected communities and the nation.

VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A critical aspect of response operations is active engagement and communication with the local communities. Several initiatives are underway to ensure that happens.

1. Active participation and engagement in town hall meetings across the region with industry and government involvement.
2. Coordination of public involvement through a volunteer registration hotline (1-866-448-5816), alternative technology, products and services e-mail (horizonsupport@aol.com), and response and safety training scheduled and conducted in numerous locations.
3. More than 35,889 inquiries received online via the response website (www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com) with more than 34,478 inquiries completed, with 4-hour average time of response.
4. Over 12 million page hits on response website.
5. Over 754 documents created/posted to response website for public consumption.
6. News, photo/video releases, advisories to more than 5,000 media/governmental/private contacts.
7. Full utilization of social media including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr.
8. Establishment of Local Government hotlines in Houma, LA (985-493-7835), Mobile, AL (251-445-8968), New Orleans, LA (985-902-5253).

CONCLUSION

From the very beginning of this crisis, the federal government has been in charge of the largest environmental cleanup effort in our nation's history. Thousands of ships and other vessels have been deployed to the Gulf. There are now nearly 46,000 personnel working across four states to contain and clean up the oil. These personnel are assisting in efforts to prevent more oil from coming ashore, clean beaches, train response workers, and help process claims.

On July 7, Admiral Allen announced the launch of a new federal web portal—RestoreTheGulf.gov—dedicated to providing the American people with clear and accessible information and resources related to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill response and recovery. The site is designed to serve as a one-stop repository for news, data and operational updates related to administration-wide efforts to stop the BP oil leak and mitigate its impact on the environment, the economy and public health—unifying web resources across the administration and increasing public access to the latest information.

The Unified Command continues to attack the spill. As of July 6, 2010, over 28 million gallons of oily water have been successfully recovered using mechanical surface cleaning methods. Further, over a million gallons of surface dispersants have been applied to break up the slick, and controlled burns have been used as weather conditions have allowed. In addition to the ongoing offshore oil recovery operations, significant containment and exclusion booms have been deployed and staged strategically throughout the Gulf region. These booms are used to protect environmental and cultural resources, as well as critical infrastructure, as identified in the

applicable Area Contingency Plans (ACPs). To date, nearly three million feet of boom have been positioned to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Fourteen staging areas and three regional command centers have been established across the Gulf Coast states. The Secretary of Defense approved the requests of the Governors of Alabama (up to 3,000), Florida (up to 2,500), Louisiana (up to 6,000), and Mississippi (up to 6,000) to use their National Guard forces in Title 32, U.S. Code, status to help in the response to the oil spill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We are ready to answer any questions you may have.